

## GREEK ETHICS AND FREEDOM

By H. D. LEWIS

THE problem of moral freedom was never an acute one for the Greeks. This was because they thought of the moral life in terms of a goodness which men are by nature disposed to pursue. Aristotle typified well the attitude of his contemporaries when he made the conceptions which he had found useful in his study of natural life also fundamental for ethics. There is a growth which is natural to man, there is a certain capacity, to be thought of not merely as a power but also as a tendency, which it is his function to fulfil. The 'potential' stands in this relation to the 'actual', that the unorganised passions and impulses which constitute the raw material of goodness acquire a final form with an inevitability so inherent to the nature of man that it is not fundamentally different from the inevitability by which an acorn becomes an oak tree. Admittedly reason makes a difference, and no one would confuse the naturalism of Aristotle with that of Hobbes or Hume. Reason enters into the Supreme Good in the form of 'Contemplation' and the requirements of practical life are discerned by the exercise of Practical Wisdom in a way that makes reason the master much more than the 'slave of the passions'. Even so, the End that is proper to man remains one to which he is directed by his nature; and the problem of ethics is, therefore, the problem what is the nature of man and in what environment can he become most truly himself, most truly what he really wants to be.

This represents no substantial departure from the teaching of Plato. For although Plato does not set out like Aristotle to define the Supreme Good in terms of our own aspirations, but rather gives the Form of the Good a completeness and reality of its own, he is, none the less, convinced that man finds in the Form of the Good what is most akin to the distinctive constituent of his own nature—his reason. And in virtue of this likeness the 'Good' has an irresistible attraction for anyone who properly understands its nature.

This approach to ethical problems was facilitated for the Greeks by the absence of a sharp distinction between moral and non-moral values, such as we are familiar with to-day. They were indeed brought easily to the idea of one Supreme Good to be exhibited in the whole of life, and the fundamental principles of their ethical theories did not, therefore, deviate markedly from the principles implied in the attainment of estimable qualities and accomplishments generally. Analogies with some art or craft have a significant recurrence in the most important contexts of Greek moral philosophy. The pursuit of moral worth thus presented itself to the Greeks with at least such inevitability as we find in the cultivation of some gift in whose exercise a man is bound to take the greatest delight.

An obvious reflection of this view is the Socratic maxim 'Virtue is Knowledge'. But Plato and Aristotle understood well that this maxim could not be accepted without qualification. It did not accord altogether with experience. For very often we seem, at any rate, to choose the worse course knowing the better. For this problem Plato found an answer, satisfactory to him, in the distinction between genuine knowledge and opinion. It is only when we rely on uncertain opinions, on ideas derived at second hand or conventions on whose purpose we have not ourselves reflected, that our conduct may not be in line with our principles. When we really understand, when the nature of the good is properly the possession of our own minds, then we are certain to model our conduct upon it. This did not satisfy Aristotle. He pointed out<sup>1</sup> that many persons hold their fallible beliefs with the same firmness and assurance as others their certain knowledge. But his own treatment of the subject does not take us very far. He observed, quite rightly, that passion or fear may induce a momentary blindness and that, again, we often fail to perceive the application of some general principle to our own case. But this is not the whole of the matter—far from it. There remain the much more important cases where we seem deliberately and calmly to do what we know to be wrong. And the fact that Aristotle manages only to touch the fringes of the problem shows that he did not concern himself deeply with it, notwithstanding the downright admission in one context that we do sometimes choose the worse course knowing the better. It is moreover hard to see what alternative to the Platonic solution is possible on Aristotle's theory of goodness.

We can still admit that Aristotle's principles fully allowed him to supply a very necessary corrective to the superficial views of

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, Book VII, 1146 b.

the Sophists and their assumption that goodness, as well as intellectual excellence, could be produced by teaching alone. He was quite entitled to stress the importance of discipline and training. For he was not bound to regard this training of the will as a factor altogether apart from the process of ethical enlightenment. The value of the training and its perpetuation in the right sort of habit could be thought to lie in the deepening of Practical Wisdom to which it led, and the consequent fuller devotion to the good. This in the main seems to be the view that Aristotle does hold. At any rate there is no certain indication of the contrary such as would show a real appreciation of the issues involved in the problem of deliberate wrong-doing.

But whether or not it be held that the typical Greek view of the nature of goodness allows of some deviation from a 'Socratic ethics', there is certainly required by it the ascription of virtue and vice altogether to some combination of the factors of enlightenment, training, and environment. There is no room for genuine rebellion. On the contrary, as Professor A. E. Taylor reminds us, "the principle that goodness is in the soul what health and fitness are in the body is really at the bottom of all Greek thinking on morality".<sup>2</sup>

It has to be stressed that, to the extent that the Greeks were compelled to take some account of deliberate wrong-doing, they were driven to do so by the fact that experience seems to present us with instances of it. Men did apparently choose the worse course, and however perplexing the fact might be, it had to be accommodated somehow in ethical theories. But the thought that a power of making the wrongful choice may itself be a condition of virtue does not seem to have occasioned serious misgiving. Deliberate wickedness presented itself mainly as a fact of experience, not as an ethical postulate. And this is a most significant way in which the problem of freedom had not for the Greeks the acuteness which it usually has for us.

There would still be a problem of freedom. On its more theoretical side this would be the problem of deciding how we must understand and describe men's independence of their environment in so far as they are also clearly determined by their environment or, as it used to be put, not unfairly as it seems to me, 'organic to their world'. Art supplies an obvious illustration. The poet is in one sense the creature of his age, of his immediate environment, and of traditions that reach into remotest ages of the past, but he is also supremely free. The influences that affect him are assimilated by his mind with a

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, page 105.

completeness that makes his creations distinctively his own. The more sensitive he is the more are factors of the world about him brought into rich combinations and transformed as they become parts of a unique individuality. But just what can we mean by individuality here, and what can we say in a final sense about the distinctness of persons at this level? These are important questions, and they have been very fruitfully discussed by philosophers, not least in fairly recent times. They have the greatest importance for speculative thought, and they enter deeply into religious questions.

On the practical side there are such problems as those of the statesman and the educator when they have to decide how far it is wise to interfere with the spontaneous development of mind and character if the finest qualities are to be elicited. How may instruction be effective without being mechanical or biased, how is society to give positive support to the arts and sciences without affecting the free play of the mind; in what measure should efficiency in matters of government be sacrificed when that seems necessary for the political education of a people; and again, a most acute problem at the moment, how far should we venture to influence one another in matters of religious belief? These are also questions of great moment, and here, as on the theoretical side, there is a great deal to be learnt from the Greeks.

For not only had the Greeks a distinctive feeling for the integration and harmony required for the development of persons in the present sense, and especially in those aspects of men's lives that are most easily assimilated to aesthetic pursuits, they also provided us with specific principles and conceptions of the greatest importance in this context. Plato's comparison of the education of the soul to the 'nurture' of a plant upon which we cannot impose a form of our own but which can be brought to its richest bloom by careful tending under suitable climatic conditions and in the right soil, the insistence upon the importance of general environment as well as direct instruction, and Aristotle's conception of 'The Mean', of a fittingness to one's own nature and one's circumstances discerned by the insight that comes with experience and devotion to the good, are obvious indications of ways in which our grasp of the problem of freedom in the sense in question at the moment, in all its aspects, is enhanced by the study of Greek thought. But here we have, none the less, not at all the problem of freedom that men have in mind when they speak of freedom as a postulate of ethics, however much the latter may be intertwined in practice with such problems as confront the parent or the statesman.

The problem of moral freedom in the proper sense is one that arises when the idea of duty, obligation, law, of a 'categorical imperative' of guilt and remorse, of ultimate praise or blame, are made central to ethical thought. These are ideas we have derived mainly from Hebrew attitudes and habits of thought, deepened by Christian teaching, and preserved, with not unimportant distortions, in traditional theology. Their presupposition found classical expression in Kantian ethics and in the celebrated maxim, 'I ought, therefore I can'. It was unfortunate that certain beliefs about the life of man arrived at on independent epistemological and metaphysical grounds prejudiced the presentation of this principle, and its implications, by Kant himself. For he seems in some regards forced to the conclusion that only the good will is free, and even that its freedom consists in some timeless once for all act—whatever that may mean in relation to the conduct of men. This has helped to perpetuate those theological distortions of ethical principles at which I have hinted above. But Kant did distinguish between the 'holy will' and the 'good will' which, in spite of being 'objectively determined', is 'not necessarily in unison with the law'.<sup>3</sup> And it seems plain to me that, in spite of the unfortunate bifurcation of our nature into the 'pure' and the 'empirical' selves, Kant's conception of moral obligation turned essentially on a genuine conflict between duty and interest. What he was struggling to fit into his system, not always, it must be admitted, with conspicuous success, was the conviction of the ordinary man that if there be such a thing as duty, if there is genuine moral responsibility, then it must be the case, not only that we are able to perform certain actions, but also, as Professor Broad has stressed,<sup>4</sup> that we *need not* perform them.

Philosophers have not found it easy to determine how precisely we must conceive the freedom of choice which duty thus seems to require, and how far we can be said to enjoy it. During the last century it was common to seek a solution of the problem by combining the Greek view with that of Kant, a most unnatural yoking of principles which the idealists endeavoured to force upon ethics in other ways also—with much ingenuity and persistence, and to the great confusion of moral philosophy. Man, it was urged, is free because he is 'self-determined', his desires direct his conduct, not in isolation from one another, but as taken up into the unity of 'the self as

<sup>3</sup> *Principles of the Metaphysic of Ethics*, ed. Abbot, p.31.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Determinism, Indeterminism, and Libertarianism*.

a whole'; influences from outside himself affect him only as they are assimilated into his own nature; his own past, as well as the environment to which he is organic, determines him only as brought to life anew in the continual shaping of character, and a motive takes its final form in the very process of issuing in action. There is thus no mechanical determination in the flow of conduct in accordance with character, a matter but little appreciated in Associationist psychology such as that of Bain and Mill which Bradley trounces so severely in his *Ethical Studies* and his *Logic*. But when every allowance has been made for the sounder psychology of the idealist view of character, are we much nearer a solution of the properly ethical problem of freedom? What we are offered is only a superior way of being determined, it is in essentials the same sort of freedom as is exhibited in knowledge or in art; it presents itself with greater completeness in good conduct than in bad, as the terms 'self-mastery' and 'consistency' as applied in the praise of conduct suggest. But the freedom which obligation seems to require is not itself in any way a part of the goodness of the action as symmetry would be an element in the beauty of a picture. It is the freedom to choose to do the action or not to do it, and it is not a whit affected when we choose the bad.

There is thus no solution of the problem of *moral* freedom by noting that there is usually a perfectly innocent paradox of freedom and necessity in rational experience. Admittedly freedom and necessity do meet wherever there is thought. We see the truth by making it our own in active thought, but the more we do so the more we are bound to think in a certain way, to submit to the structure of truth itself. Our freedom is also conformity to law. The artist is most creative when he sees that he *must* do just this and not that, when he is most held to his way; we love those to whom we are drawn, and give ourselves with most abandon when we are already in thrall; in religion there is also a 'service' which is 'perfect freedom', a 'perfect law of freedom', a 'law which is my delight'. But the necessity of duty is not of this order at all. It is not itself also freedom, but rather *presupposes* it, it is the 'must' of command, not of conformity, and it implies that we need not conform. It does not vary with attainment, as in art or knowledge. The wicked are fully as free as the good. Their freedom is in that regard absolute. It is a 'liberty of indifference', a liberty, not to go one way, the ideal way, but several.

Viewed in this way, moral evil is unlike any other; it is not a functional disorder or disease, it is not like our shortcomings

in art or knowledge, for it can be brought home to the individual as his own disobedience or rebellion ; it is guilt, a wilful violation of law, and thus reprehensible as no other evil can be. Moral value in turn is obedience, and calls for a distinctive sort of praise. But our terms are apt to confuse us here, for our usage of 'merit' is very ambiguous. A man may acquire merit as an athlete, a poet, or a statesman. But guilt, mainly because of its more strictly forensic origin, represents more truly that peculiar quality of moral distinctions which set them in sharp opposition to other values because of the special way they rest on the will of the individual—hence we speak more of the problem of guilt than of merit. The Greeks had little consciousness of guilt, at least so far as the teaching of their main philosophers goes—Greek drama has a somewhat different tale to tell. And so there was no sharp distinction for them between aesthetic and moral good. But if we are to draw that distinction, and think of moral wickedness as violation of a law or imperative, we must not content ourselves with the freedom which matters most on a Greek view of ethics. And although this appears so plain it is not idle to stress it at some length. For the view of freedom as self-determination is still the view normally accepted by ethical writers, not excepting those who give prominence to the idea of obligation. But what we must presuppose for the latter purpose—and the word 'presuppose' is important here—is a freedom to go one way or the other, a freedom of open possibilities.

An unambiguous acknowledgement of this principle seems to be the first condition of clear thinking in ethics and theology to-day.

## TRUTH AND SIGNIFICANCE

By C. LEWY

I WANT to discuss in this paper an alleged paradox involving the word "true", which has recently been suggested by Professor W. V. Quine. In the course of a review of E. J. Nelson's article in *Mind* on "Contradiction and the Presupposition of Existence", Quine says,<sup>1</sup> "At the beginning of the discussion I showed that there is no need to allow inference of 'a exists' from 'fa' and from ' $\sim$ fa'. Now there is a curious line of thought, tangent at that point, which merits passing mention in conclusion. Viz.: Even if 'a exists' cannot be inferred from 'fa' and from ' $\sim$ fa', still 'a' is meaningful' can, and doesn't this revive the original problem in another form?" (The original problem, which I shall not discuss here, was briefly whether the singular propositions *fa* and  $\sim$ *fa* are contradictories. Langford has argued that they are not; for both of them entail  $(\exists x). fx \vee \sim fx$  and "a exists", which are not logically necessary). Quine goes on, "One possible rejoinder is that 'a' is meaningful', if true, is analytic, so that 'fa' and ' $\sim$ fa' can still be contradictories; but before resting content with this rejoinder I should like to see a satisfactory analysis of meaningfulness. Another possible rejoinder is that 'a' is meaningful' cannot be inferred from 'fa', but only from ' $\sim$ fa' is meaningful'. But then there is the counter-rejoinder that 'fa' is meaningful' follows from ' $\sim$ fa' is true', and ' $\sim$ fa' is true' follows from 'fa'. Paradoxes involving the word 'true', however, are no novelty". I think it will be agreed that we should not rest content with another paradox involving the word "true", however common such paradoxes may be. And I want to show that in fact, if certain important distinctions are not overlooked, no "paradox" will arise.

In order to avoid a number of points which would unnecessarily complicate the main issue, let us consider the suggested paradox in a somewhat modified form. Take the proposition (1) "Vienna is large". I think Quine might suggest that (1) entails (2) "The word 'large' is meaningful", and that (2) is also entailed by (1A) "It is not the case that Vienna is large." But since (1) and (1A) seem to be contradictories, we should have to suppose that (2) is analytic. I think, however, that it is quite certain that neither (1) nor (1A) does entail (2). For the sake of brevity, let us leave out (1A), and consider (1) and (2)

<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of Symbolic Logic*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 1947), p.55.

only. The suggestion then is that (1) entails (2). But now (1) is the same proposition as the proposition (1') "Wien ist gross"; hence (1) cannot entail (2), unless (1') entails (2). It is quite obvious, however, that (1') does not entail (2): it is quite obvious that (1') entails nothing whatever about the English word "large". It follows that (1) does not entail (2) either. (And of course, since (1) entails nothing whatever about the German word "gross", nor does (1')). I think this is one way of showing, quite conclusively, that (1) does not entail (2); I believe this can also be shown in other ways, which are equally conclusive; but it would be superfluous to attempt to do so here. Further, it is also quite obvious that (2) is not analytic, or, as Quine sometimes says, "logically true". For in order to find out whether (2) is true or false, one would obviously have to conduct some sort of empirical enquiry (e.g., one might look up an English dictionary): one could not possibly find this out by logical considerations alone. This again is only *one* way of showing that (2) is contingent, but I think there is no need to mention others. (It may be worth while, however, to ask simply whether the denial of (2) is self-contradictory. I see no way of deducing a contradiction from the proposition "The word 'large' is not meaningful"). I think, therefore, that we can say, quite safely, that any analysis of meaningfulness on which (2) was analytic could be immediately dismissed as incorrect.

I have been trying to show that (1) does not entail (2). And this leads naturally to what Quine would regard as "another possible rejoinder", namely, that (2) is not entailed by (1), but only by (3) "The sentence 'Vienna is large' is meaningful". And to this we must, I think, agree: the proposition, "The sentence 'Vienna is large' is meaningful, but the word 'large' is meaningless", does seem to me to be self-contradictory. But now the next rejoinder would be that (3) is entailed by (4) "Vienna is large is true"; and since (4) is entailed by (1), it follows that (2) is entailed by (1). And this is precisely what I have claimed to be certainly false. Is it true, however, that (3) is entailed by (4)? And is it true that (4) is entailed by (1)? It seems to me that we can so use the sentence (a) "Vienna is large is true", that the proposition expressed by it is entailed by (1). But if we do so use it, then the proposition expressed by it does not entail (3). On the other hand, we can use the sentence (a), and use it just as correctly, in such a way that the proposition expressed by it does entail (3); but then the proposition expressed by it is not entailed by (1). This seems to me to be a point of some importance in other connexions as well, and

I should like to explain it more fully. One way of using the sentence (a), and using it correctly, is such that the proposition expressed by it, when it is used in this way, can also be correctly expressed by using the sentence (b) "The proposition that Vienna is large is true", or the sentence (c) "It is true that Vienna is large". But if (a) is used in this way, then the proposition expressed by it does not entail (3) : for the proposition expressed by (b) or by (c) certainly does not entail (3). If we were to translate (b) or (c) into German, we should have to translate the words "Vienna is large" as well as the remaining words : and since the proposition expressed by the German sentence which we should thus get clearly does not entail (3), nor can the proposition expressed by (a), when (a) is so used that it expresses the same proposition as that which is expressed by (b) or (c).

It is, I think, worth while to point out that the fact that (a) can correctly be used in this way has an important consequence. It shows that it is simply false to maintain that whenever we use the expression "Vienna is large", we are always saying something about the sentence "Vienna is large" : for in (a) we do use the expression "Vienna is large", and yet we can so use (a) that the proposition expressed by it entails nothing whatever about the sentence "Vienna is large".

But now (a) can also be used, equally correctly, in another way: it can be so used that the proposition expressed by it does entail (3). For (a) can be so used that the proposition expressed by it, when it is used in this way, can also be expressed, just as correctly, by the sentence (d) "The proposition expressed by the sentence 'Vienna is large' is true". And the proposition expressed by (d) does entail that the sentence "Vienna is large" is meaningful. But if (a) is used in *this* way, then the proposition expressed by it is not entailed by (1). What does entail the proposition expressed by (a), when (a) is used in this way, is not (1) alone, but the conjunction of (1) and (1B) "The proposition expressed by the sentence 'Vienna is large' is the proposition that Vienna is large." And (1B) is a *contingent* proposition : for the sentence "Vienna is large" might have expressed the proposition that Vienna is ugly. Whether it does or not can only be established by an empirical inquiry. But if the sentence "Vienna is large" did express the proposition that Vienna is ugly, and hence if (1B) were false, then the proposition (1) would have been true, and yet the proposition expressed by (a), when (a) is used in the way in question, would have been false.

Now it may be said that the sentence (d) can also be used in such a way that the proposition expressed by it entails (1B). And hence it may be said that the sentence (a) can be used in this way too. But in this case the proposition expressed by (a) would still not be entailed by (1), though it would, of course, entail (1). Similarly, if there is a use of the sentence (b) in which the proposition expressed by it entails (1B), then the proposition expressed by (b), when (b) is used in this way, does entail (3); but then it is not entailed by (1). The crucial point is, however, that there is *no* correct use of (a) in which the proposition expressed by it both entails (3) and is entailed by (1). Hence, the suggested paradox does not arise.

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## ANALYSIS AND SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE

By LEWIS S. FEUER

ANALYSIS is often taken to be an inquiry into the meaning of propositions which can be conducted apart from any philosophic standpoint. At the same time, it is often held that errors in metaphysics arise from misleading analyses of propositions. These two views seem to me incompatible. A given analysis could not be adjudged misleading unless we had to begin with some criterion which would enable us to identify an analysis as "correct". In this note, I shall try to show that an extra-analytic criterion must be invoked to decide whether a proposed analysis is correct or not. Stipulations must be laid down according to which no analysis is valid which leads, for instance, to the postulation of unverifiable realms of being. If analysis were completely an autonomous inquiry, there would be no basis for excluding analyses which were simply precise formulations of non-scientific ideas. Analysis, in other words, must be controlled by the general principles of the scientific world-view.

To show how a scientific, extra-analytic criterion must be invoked in analysis, let us consider some provocative remarks on analysis by the late Miss Stebbing. Miss Stebbing, in a discussion of sentences concern "lions" and "unicorns", wrote: "The faulty analysis of propositions, which resulted from this assumption led to the introduction of an erroneous metaphysical doctrine, namely, that there are different modes of being: existent being and non-existent being. These difficulties are resolved by the complete analysis of the propositions in question." (*A Modern Introduction to Logic*, p. 161.)

Miss Stebbing endeavoured to prove her point by comparing two statements like "I am hunting a lion" and "I am thinking of a unicorn". The first she analysed as a statement of the form "For some  $x$ :  $x$  is a lion.  $x$  is hunted by me." It follows from this statement that "there are lions" is true, for the former could not be asserted unless lions exist. Miss Stebbing noted, on the other hand, that "I am thinking of a unicorn" does not imply "there are unicorns". "Being thought of" is not a property of objects in the way in which "being hunted" is. To believe otherwise, Miss Stebbing said, was to mistake a sameness in grammatical form for a sameness in logical form. There was, however, one other alternative, and that was "to admit that there must in some sense *be* a unicorn, even though we have

admitted that unicorns don't exist, . . . to conclude that there are non-existent individuals" (p. 159). This alternative, of course, Miss Stebbing regarded as absurd.

We agree, indeed, as scientists and empiricists that griffins and unicorns don't exist. But let us suppose a metaphysician who affirms that griffins and unicorns do "exist" in some sense. Perhaps this metaphysician will base his statement on some supposed apprehension of essences. It is clear that corresponding to his metaphysics there would be some "analysis" of statements. Every metaphysics would thus have its corresponding analytic reflection.

A Platonic metaphysician would differ with Miss Stebbing concerning the analysis of "unicorns are unreal". She regards it as a statement of the form. "It is false that there is an  $x$  such that  $x$  is a unicorn". The Platonist would however interpret it as a statement that "for all  $x$ 's,  $x$  is a unicorn implies that  $x$  is not physically exemplified". The latter statement would be compatible with an assertion that "there are unicorns", because "physically exemplified" is taken as a predicate and not as an operator or quantifier. Existence, as a logical concept, would then be differentiated from spatio-temporal exemplification. The Platonist might indeed argue that his mode of analysis was appropriate even to Miss Stebbing's example "I am hunting a lion". For, if lions become extinct, there will still be men who will hunt for them, and the statement "I am hunting a lion" will not imply "there are physically existent lions".

We agree then with the view enunciated by Russell when he said: "Logic. . . must no more admit a unicorn than zoology can; for logic is concerned with the real world just as truly as zoology, though with its more abstract and general features." (*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, p. 169. A later edition, however, omitted this statement.) Analysis should correspond to the structure and furniture of the world. But does "analysis", as an autonomous enterprise, provide us with a basis for excluding metaphysical proposals? The argument against Platonic realms is a materialist, empiricist one. As scientists, we wish to eliminate non-scientific, non-verifiable sentences from our language. If a metaphysician desired, however, to include such sentences in acceptable discourse, he could elaborate a consistent "analysis" of them. The symbols of analysis can always be accommodated to unverifiable realms of being. Analysis, as formal inquiry, has no basis for objection to non-scientific ideas.

It is desirable, therefore, to recognize that analysis is best carried on within the framework of the scientific standpoint. Apart from this standpoint, analysis becomes sterile. For it is then a useless multiplication of "meanings" without reference to those significances which are actually involved in scientific practice.

### PROBABILITY: A REJOINDER TO MR. J. O. URMSON

By B. MAYO

I WISH to comment on a difficulty raised by Mr. Urmson in his article on "Two of the Senses of 'Probable'" in the first issue of the new series of *Analysis*. Mr. Urmson draws attention to certain differences between "type one" and "type two" probability statements. One of these differences he finds interesting, because it "raises a difficult problem, which I do not try to solve".

The problem is that "type two" statements are apparently not empirical. Mr. Urmson takes as an example of a question which would be answered by a "type one" probability statement "Is it probable that rain will fall within 24 hours on the evidence that the glass has fallen one inch within the previous 24 hours?" and compares this with the question "Is it probable that all cows are ruminant, on the evidence that all examined cows have been ruminant?" He shows that the examination of more cows is irrelevant to the second question; and accordingly sets the problem, "If 'type two' probability statements are not synthetic *a posteriori*, what are they?"

First I want to distinguish between two possible types of statement of the form "All cows are ruminant". The first is what Mr. Urmson calls a "generalisation which is not completely established". The second is a "completely established" generalisation. Of the first type we may say "Probably G", whereas of the second type we could say "Certainly G." But could we? Surely, in the sense in which probability is contrasted with certainty, no generalisation is ever "certain". Mr. Urmson himself emphasises that favourable evidence "increases" the probability of such generalisations. But, if so, there can be no difference between "completely" and "incompletely" established generalisations except that, in the latter case, "we do not *feel* that the observed regularity is sufficiently good ground to generalise from it *unreservedly*" (my italics). But then Mr.

Urmson's example, "All cows are ruminant", is not, as he appears to assume, an instance of an "incompletely established" generalisation: for it possesses a property which characterises a "completely established" generalisation, namely the property that *all* of *many* examined instances have been favourable, and *none* unfavourable.

An analysis of the difference between the two questions quoted in para. (2) above discloses the ambiguity in the word "evidence" that Mr. Urmson has himself noted. In one case, the "evidence" is the empirical evidence that the glass has fallen one inch within the previous 24 hours. In the other case, it is the (equally empirical) evidence that all examined cows have been ruminant. But the first type of evidence is what Mr. Urmson calls "specificatory", whereas the second type is apparently "substantial", but actually, as I shall show, it is of a third and peculiar type. Now Mr. Urmson asserts that the adduction of "specificatory" evidence does not alter the character of the problem. For the question "What is the probability of rain in the next 24 hours on the evidence that the glass has fallen one inch within the previous 24 hours?" can be reformulated without mentioning "evidence" at all.

Let us therefore attempt to rephrase the first question in such a way as to employ the word "evidence" in the same sense in both questions. "Is it probable that rain will fall within 24 hours after the glass has fallen one inch within the previous 24 hours on the evidence that all examined instances of the situation of the glass falling one inch within 24 hours have been followed by instances of rain falling within the subsequent 24 hours?" The questions are now exactly parallel. But the change in meaning of the reformulated question shows that the difference in the senses of "probable" is not the difference between Mr. Urmson's two types of probability-statement. For it is clearly legitimate to speak of the probability of an event B, given an event A, in a context in which only a certain proportion of As have been observed to be followed by Bs. But is it equally legitimate to speak of the probability of an event B, given an event A, in a context in which every A has been followed by a B? This would appear to be a "type two" probability-statement. But in both types "probability" has a definite meaning (though not necessarily a precise *value*) only so long as some principle, roughly (though inadequately) defined as the principle that the observed will resemble the unobserved, is taken as axiomatic. Hume recognised that probability statements presuppose the truth of this principle. But the question "Is it

probable that all cows are ruminant on the evidence etc.", means "Are we justified in taking this observed uniformity to be a uniformity?" And this is a question, not of probability, but of procedure.

We now see why this kind of evidence is peculiar. The fact that all instances of A have been instances of B: is this "evidence" for the statement that unobserved instances of A will be instances of B? It is clearly not "specificatory" evidence; but is it "substantial"? I suggest that it is not "evidence" at all. Evidence alters the probability of a statement, and in this case there is no genuine probability statement.

I have been using the term "probability" in reference to both *events* and *statements*, without having clearly distinguished between them. It is remarkable that the differences between the probability of events and the probability of statements can be described in the same terms as the differences between Mr. Urmson's two types of probability statement—with one exception. According to Mr. Urmson, "type two" probability statements—or what I should call statements of the probability of statements—are not empirical statements. But I think I have shown that the example with which he illustrates this point is unsatisfactory. Are any other "type two" probability statements (e.g., "the corpuscular theory of light is probably correct") empirical?

The distinguishing characteristic of "type two" probability statements is that instead of using the word "probability" in a generalisation, we use the word *about* a generalisation. Instead of dealing with statements about facts, we are dealing with statements about statements. Whether such statements are empirical or not depends on our definition of "empirical". If we define an empirical statement as one which experience either verifies or refutes, then a statement about facts,  $S_1$ , will be empirical, but a statement  $S_2$  which is about  $S_1$ , namely, "Probably  $S_1$ " will not be empirical. For however we decide in what sense we are using the word "verification", in the case of  $S_1$ , it is clear that  $S_2$  cannot be verified *in that sense*. And Mr. Urmson agrees that even "type one" probability statements are not conclusively verifiable. Accordingly he uses "empirical statement" to mean one which ordinary experience leads us to accept or reject. This enables us to close the gap between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ ; for the same facts, or facts of the same order, will determine their acceptance or rejection. And in this sense they will both be empirical statements.

